Molecular Genetics of Nitrogen Fixation and to serve as focal point to stimulate Genetic Engineering research in the country. The Department of Bio-technology, Government of India, has agreed to fund the Unit upto March 31, 1993. The project was earlier located in the School of Environmental Sciences of the University and is presently attached to the Centre for Bio-technology. Initially the Unit had 23 staff positions.

The Academic Council of the University in its meeting held on 24th February, 1989 resolved to authorise the Vice-Chancellor to set up a Committee to recommend modalities for merger of Units/Projects such as the Genetic Engineering Unit with the University system. The Committee has since met twice.

The JNU is one of the Universities selected by the UGC for establishment of an Academic Staff College for orientation of teachers. The University has so far made recruitment to the posts of Director, Deputy Director and Assistant Director of the Academic Staff College in accordance with the UGC guidelines.

Drop outs from Schools in the Country

2752. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA:

SHRI PRITHIBI MAJHI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what was the rate of drop outs of students from Primary and Higher Secondary levels in the country during the years 1986-1987, 988 and during 1989 so far;

(b) whether Govt. have conducted any survey to ascertain the reasons for drop-out, if so, with what results; and

(c) what corrective steps Government have taken or propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) According to latest information available with the Ministry, the drop out rate of students in 1985-86 was 47.61 per cent for classes I to V, 64.42 per cent for classes I—VIII and 77.62 per cent for classes I—X. The drop out rate at Higher Secondary stage is not collected.

(b) and (c) A large number of research studies have been conducted by various bodies to ascertain the causes of students dropping out. These studies enumerate a large number of reasons responsible for drop-outs. The main among them are: 1. Socio-economic conditions. 2. Demands of work on the child to supplement the family income or look after household chores. 3. Indifference of parents towards education of children, specially girls. 4. Lack of parental support, particularly in the case of first generation learners. 5. In-adequately provided schools and inefficient teaching in schools. 6. Curriculum not being related to local needs.

A wide range of programmes is required in order to make an impact on the situation. The National Policy on Education formulated in 1986 gives highest priority to solving the problem of children dropping out of school and recommends adoption of an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning, and applied at the grass-roots level all over the country, to ensure children's retention at school.

Three centrally assisted schemes have been started to (i) provide minimum essential facilities to improve primary schools through 'Operation Blackboard' (ii) strengthening and reorganisation of the Non-Formal Education Programme to provide education to school drop-outs, children from habitations without schools, girls who cannot attend whole day schools

and working children (iii) reorganise and restructure Teacher Education including establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training to increase teacher competence and provide academic support. In addition, new text books in accordance with the National Policy on Education, 1986 are being developed upto elementary level in a time bound programme by NCERT and State Governments. Various incentive programmes like free supply of uniforms to girls students, free mid-day meals, free text books and attendance scholarships are being implemented by the State Governments/UT Administrations in the State Sector.

Unfit Private Buses under DTC

2753. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is also a fact that a large number of private buses have become unfit for public use mostly on route Nos. 820, 810, 860, 830, 900, 310;

(b) when they were last inspected by the DTC authorities; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to replace all unfit buses, if so, by when and if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) to (c) The Corporation engages only those buses which are road-worthy and declared fit by State Transport Authority of Delhi Administration. There are about 714 private buses plying on the routes of DTC and it is only on the basis of valid certificate on inspection from STA, Delhi that the buses are allowed to run. Inspection of buses by STA is in accordance with the prescribed periodicity.

Study of Assamese Language in Aligarh Muslim University

2754. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been no provision for the study of Assamese language in the undergraduate level in the Aligarh Muslim University and as such many students from Assam are facing difficulties;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government propose to introduce Assamese in the Aligarh Muslim University at the under graduate level from the current session?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) and (b) At present there is no provision for the study of Assamese Language at the under-graduate level in the Aligarh Muslim University, because this University has not been able to get staff created for the purpose. The Govt. are not aware of the difficulties, if any, being faced by students from Assam in this regard.

(c) No, Sir.

Delay in the Passing of Infant Code Bill in the Lok Sabha

2755. SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMTNT be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2269 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 15th March, 1989 and state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news report in the Centre of